



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/164,216	09/30/1998	RONALD PASQUALINI	NSC1-D8400	6392

33402 7590 05/29/2003

LAW OFFICES OF MARK C. PICKERING  
P.O. BOX 300  
PETALUMA, CA 94953

EXAMINER

NADAV, ORI

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2811

DATE MAILED: 05/29/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/164,216

Applicant(s)

PASQUALINI, RONALD

Examiner

ori nadav

Art Unit

2811

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 March 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 15, 19 and 38-72 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 40-44, 67 and 68 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 15, 19, 38, 39, 45-57, 60-62, 65, 66 and 69-72 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 58, 59, 63 and 64 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Art Unit: 2811

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 15, 19, 38-39, 45-57, 60-62, 65-66 and 69-72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gens et al. (5,515,225) considered alone, or over Gens et al. in view of Admitted Prior Art (APA).

Gens et al. teach in figure 3 and related text a semiconductor chip having a substrate (figure 4, the external line encircling R1) of a first conductivity type, the chip comprising a plurality of pads P1, P2, an ESD negative ring R2, a plurality of ESD positive lines (the horizontal lines located between the high power supply terminals (the square blocks indicated as VDD1 and VDD2) and the line connecting the two diodes. See also column 3, lines 32-49) not being directly connected to a steady voltage source, not being electrically connected to each other, not being directly connected to a pad, and not encircling the periphery of the chip; a plurality of switches (diodes) connected to the ESD positive lines and the ESD negative ring, and a plurality of first and second diodes D2, D1 connected to a pad and the negative ring and positive line, respectively.

Art Unit: 2811

Although Gens et al. do not explicitly state that plurality of switches are connected between the ESD positive lines and the ESD negative ring, this feature is inherent in Gens et al.'s device, because it is well known in the art that diodes are switches, of which official notice is taken. Therefore, Gens et al. teach plurality of switches being connected between the ESD positive lines and the ESD negative ring, as claimed.

In the alternative, APA teaches in figures 1 and 2 and related text a plurality of ESD switches including a transistor (figure 2) connected to the positive line and to the negative ring, respectively (page 2, lines 24-27), wherein the transistor pass current from a positive line to a negative ring when a voltage on the positive line rises at a first rate.

It would also have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to connect plurality of switches between the ESD positive lines and the ESD negative ring in Gens et al.'s device in order to provide more effective unidirectional flow of current during ESD operation.

Regarding claim 19, Gens et al. teach in figure 4 a negative line encircling the periphery of the chip.

Regarding claim 39, APA teaches in figure 2 a plurality of ESD switches including a transistor. It would also have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the

Art Unit: 2811

time the invention was made to use a transistor as an ESD switch in Gens et al.'s device, because it is well known in the art to use a transistor as an ESD switch.

Regarding claim 46, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 a second diode having an anode electrically connected to a pad.

Regarding claim 51, APA teaches in figures 1 and 2 and related text a plurality of ESD switches including a transistor (figure 2) connected to the positive line and to the negative ring, respectively (page 2, lines 24-27), wherein the transistor pass current from a positive line to a negative ring when a voltage on the positive line rises at a first rate.

Regarding claim 52, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 switches (diodes) blocking a current from flowing from the positive line to the negative ring when a voltage on the positive line rises at a second rate that is different from the first rate.

Regarding claim 53, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 second diodes forward biased when the voltage on the positive line rises at a second rate.

Art Unit: 2811

Regarding claims 54, 61 and 66, Gens et al. teach in figures 3 and 4 that none of the positive lines encircles the periphery of the chip.

Regarding claim 55, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 a positive line connected to a negative ring via a plurality of ESD switches.

Regarding claims 56, 60 and 65, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 an ESD switch Z (figure 2, the right most diode) being directly connected to a positive and negative lines.

Regarding claim 57, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 that none of the positive lines being directly connected to a pad.

Regarding claims 57 and 62, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 only one second diode D1 is connected between a pad P2 and a positive line Vddi. Note that R1 is Vddi, a positive line (column 4, lines 7-8).

Regarding claim 62, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 a plurality of ESD switches D1, Z connected to the ESD positive lines and ESD negative ring so that each switch connected to a positive line and the ESD negative ring, and a switch Z of the plurality of

Art Unit: 2811

ESD switches passing a current from the positive line to the negative ring when a voltage on the positive line rises at a first rate that is faster than a second rate.

Regarding claims 69-72, Gens et al. teach in figure 3 a second diode D1 being directly connected to a pad and a positive line.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

3. Claims 40-44 and 67-68 are allowed.
4. Claims 58, 59, 63 and 64 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Reasons for allowance***

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:  
Gens et al. (5,515,225) appears to be the closest prior art reference. Gens et al. teach substantially the entire claimed structure as recited in claim 40, except disclosing the

Art Unit: 2811

structure of the first diode. Therefore, prior art do not teach or render obviousness the semiconductor structure, as claimed.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

### ***Response to Arguments***

6. Applicant argues on pages 7-11 that the specification does not define the term "pad" to be only an I/O pad, because the claimed invention also provides protection to multiple isolated power supplies and isolated grounds, and multiple isolated power supplies and isolated grounds can be correlated to Vcc pads and grounds pads. Applicant further argues that the plurality of pads 1620 in figure 16 do not necessarily mean only I/O pads.

Figure 16 depicts power supply lines 1640-1647, ground line 1610, and I/O pads 1620 connected in between two diodes. No pads are connected to the power supply lines and the ground lines. Furthermore, the specification does not recite Vcc pads and grounds pads. Therefore, the plurality of pads 1620 in figure 16 can only be the I/O pads which are located in between the two diodes.



Art Unit: 2811

7. Applicant argues on page 14 that there is no support for the limitation of “only one second diode is connected between each pad and each positive line.”.

Figure 16 depicts one second diode 1635 connected between a first pad and a positive line Vcc1, and another ‘one second diode 1635’ connected between a second pad and the positive line Vcc1. Therefore, there is support in the specification for “only one second diode being connected between each pad and each positive line.”.

### ***Conclusion***

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See M.E.P. § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CAR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CAR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2811

**Papers related to this application may be submitted to Technology center (TC) 2800 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to TC 2800 via the TC 2800 Fax center located in Crystal Plaza 4, room 4-C23. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notice published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (November 15, 1989). The Group 2811 Fax Center number is (703) 308-7722 and 308-7724. The Group 2811 Fax Center is to be used only for papers related to Group 2811 applications.**

Any inquiry concerning this communication or any earlier communication from the Examiner should be directed to *Examiner Nadav* whose telephone number is **(703) 308-8138**. The Examiner is in the Office generally between the hours of 7 AM to 4 PM (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Thomas, can be reached at **(703) 308-2772**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the **Technology Center Receptionists** whose telephone number is **308-0956**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ori Nadav', is positioned above the printed name and title.

O.N.  
May 27, 2003

ORI NADAV  
PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800